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**Ricky L. Elie Pleads Guilty to  
Federal Tax Evasion Charges**

Portland, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby announced that **Ricky L. Elie**, age 41, of Biddeford, Maine pleaded guilty to 4 counts of tax evasion in the United States District Court, in Portland.

According to Court documents, between about 2000 and September 12, 2005, the defendant and his wife, Johanne M. Elie, charged personal expenses to charge accounts and then, Johanne M. Elie paid for those charges with checks drawn on a checking account of their employer, Provencher Fuels, Inc., also of Biddeford. The defendant failed to report the embezzled funds on his joint federal tax returns in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, thereby evading almost \$50,000 in income taxes. On February 12, 2008, in a related case, Johanne M. Elie pleaded guilty to federal wire fraud and tax evasion charges.

Provencher's is a family-owned fuel oil and propane delivery and burner service company which employed about 10 people. Between 2000 and 2005, the defendant was employed at Provencher's as an assistant office manager. His duties included assisting

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Johanne L. Elie with the day-to-day operations of the office, running business-related errands such as retrieving and delivering parts for the service technicians, making bank deposits, collecting on delinquent accounts, purchasing heating supplies, and other associated tasks.

According to Provencher's payroll records, between January 2001 and December 2004, the defendant received a net paycheck of between \$375.28 and \$513.27 per week. Even so, between December 2000 and October 2005, he and his wife charged over \$195,000 for, among other things, jewelry, recreational vehicles, boats, vacations, motorcycles, bicycles, art, food and sporting events and memorabilia.

The defendant faces up to 5 years in prison on each of the 4 tax evasion charges. In addition, he faces fines of up to \$250,000 on each count and restitution. The defendant has also agreed to jointly pay any order of restitution imposed on his wife at her sentencing for wire fraud and tax evasion charges.

The defendant will be sentenced after completion of a pre-sentence report by the U.S. Probation Office, in Portland.

United States Attorney Silsby praised the investigation conducted by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, the Biddeford Police Department and the United States Postal Inspection Service.

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